

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Tommy Strowd, Director, Operations, Maintenance & Construction Division  
Terrie Bates, Director, Water Resources Division

**FROM:** Susan Sylvester, Chief, Water Control Operations Bureau  
Linda Lindstrom, Chief, Applied Science Bureau  
Dean Powell, Chief, Water Supply Bureau

**DATE:** October 24, 2012

**SUBJECT:** Operational Position Statement for the Week of October 23-29, 2012

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is responsible for managing Lake Okeechobee water levels and makes operational decisions about whether to retain water or release water based on their regulation schedule release guidance. The USACE makes this decision taking into account the best available science and data provided by its staff and a variety of partners, which includes the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD).

The SFWMD team has discussed the system wide environmental conditions, the water supply conditions, and has evaluated the overall status of the water management system. Detailed reports are available at the SFWMD's [Operational Planning](#) internet page.

### Recommendation to the USACE

With current Lake stage continuing to recede slightly and within 0.3 feet of the Intermediate Subband of the 2008 Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (2008 LORS), the SFWMD recommends that the USACE follow the 2008 LORS release guidance, which continues to suggest releases up to 3000 cfs at S-79 and up to 1170 cfs at S-80. The SFWMD recognizes that there are other factors described in the Water Control Plan that guide the USACE's release decisions. More-specific SFWMD release recommendations will resume in November after the dry season begins and Lake Okeechobee stages are receding.

### Weather and Climate

Rainfall during the past week (Oct 16-23) totaled 0.80 inches district wide (through 7 am October 23<sup>rd</sup>). About 0.76 inches of rain fell directly over Lake Okeechobee during the past 7-days. During the past 30 days district-wide rainfall has totaled about 5.2 inches, 15% above average.

The SFWMD short-term weather forecast includes rain associated with Tropical Storm Sandy. Rains averaging 1-2" are forecast for Wednesday through Friday along the east coast with local rains up to 3-6". Drier conditions with a noticeable cooling trend should spread over the area during the day Saturday and continue next week. The 18-Oct Climate Prediction Center (CPC) outlook shows equal chances (33%) of below-normal, normal, and above-normal rainfall for November. For the November-March period, the current outlook (18-Oct) also shows equal chances (33%) of below-normal, normal, and above-normal rainfall. The CPC's precipitation outlooks reflect the expectation that El Nino conditions will not likely develop and contribute to above-average dry season rainfall.

### Current Conditions and Operations

The October 22, 2012 Lake Okeechobee stage (reported by the USACE on Oct 9<sup>th</sup>) was 15.87 feet NGVD, 0.02 feet lower than the previous week. The Lake is 0.57 feet higher than it was a month ago and is 3.1 feet higher than it was a year ago. The current stage is about 0.81 feet higher than the historical

average for this date. The stage is currently receding slowly within the Low Sub-band of the 2008 Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (2008 LORS) and is within 0.3 feet of the Intermediate Sub-band.

Discharges are decreasing from the Upper Kissimmee Lakes as their regulation schedules rise to winter pool elevations. Inflows to Lake Okeechobee continue, but at decreasing rates.

The LORS-2008 release guidance (Part C) suggests no releases to the WCAs; such releases are not desirable due to relatively high stages in the WCAs. WCA-2A and WCA-3A stages are above their respective regulation schedules. WCA discharges eastward to tide continue at maximum practicable rates; however, in preparation for rain from T.S. Sandy, WCA discharges to tide have been suspended. WCA discharges to tide will resume after local runoff subsides and flow-through capacity becomes available.

For Lake Okeechobee releases to tide (estuaries), Part D of the LORS-2008 release guidance continues to suggest releases at S-79 up to 3000 cfs, and at S-80 up to 1170 cfs. Note that the C-44 release point is at S-79.

Further information regarding the Extended Hydrologic Outlook and the LORS-2008 Release Guidance outcomes are available at the SFWMD's Operational Planning website at <http://www.sfwmd.gov/portal/page/portal/xweb%20-%20release%202/operational%20planning>.

The 2008 LORS release guidance continues to suggest releases larger than Baseflow releases (Baseflow releases are up to 450 cfs at S-79, and up to 200 cfs at S-80cfs). Therefore the SFWMD's Lake Okeechobee Adaptive Protocol (AP) release guidance is currently not applicable. The AP release guidance was designed primarily to determine appropriate baseflow releases and environmental water supply deliveries to the Caloosahatchee Estuary. SFWMD release recommendations per the AP release guidance will likely resume in November after the dry season begins and Lake O stages are receding. For additional information pertaining to operations history and past recommendations, refer to the archive of operational position statements at [www.sfwmd.gov](http://www.sfwmd.gov) under the Operational Planning topic.